In order to compensate the erosion in the real value of permanent disablement benefit and dependant benefit pensions, enhancements based on the rise in the cost of living index have been granted with effect from 1.8.97. The minimum rate of sickness benefit has been enhanced from Rs. 2.50 per day to Rs. 14.00 per day with effect from 19.9.98. An action plan for modernising ESI hospitals and dispensaries at a total cost of Rs. 60.00 crore has been formulated and circulated among the State Governments for implementation in consultation with the ESIC.

**Complaint against CPWD/Estate Office in Consumer Court**

*305. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an allottee of Government accommodation, who is paying (i) Licence Fee (ii) not getting House Rent Allowance (iii) and making payments as per order No. 11014/22/90-w-3 dated the 5th January 1998, (Ministry of Urban Affairs) for additions and alterations in the accommodation, can file a complaint in a Consumer Court, if there is deficiency in the services rendered by the CPWD/Estate Officer, under Consumer Protection Act, 1986;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) to (c) The laws of the land do not forbid any person from filing any complaint in any Court including the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies. However, it is for the Court to decide the admissibility of the complaint. This Ministry can not and is not expected to provide legal opinions on hypothetical cases.

**Closure of PSUs**

*309. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a newsitem "Centre to close down 11 PSUs; Bakht" published in the 'Statesman' dated the 26 November, 1998;

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the number of PSUs proposed to be disinvested to less than fifty percent of Government equity;

(d) the number of PSUs under reference to BIFR;

(e) the number of PSUs referred to Disinvestment Commission so far; and

(f) the names of PSUs considered to be strategic by Government?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) Govt. has taken a decision to extend benefits of Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to employees of following unviable Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of the Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) which are facing the prospect of winding up.

| S. NO. | Name of the PSU | No. of employees | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | National Instruments Ltd. (NIL) | 863 | Prima-facie conclusion by BIFR for winding up |
| 2. | Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Ltd. (BOGL) | 472 | Prima-facie conclusion by BIFR for winding up. |
| 3. | Weighbird India Ltd. (WIL) | 183 | Final decision by BIFR for winding up. |

| S. NO. | Name of the PSU | No. of employees | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | National Bicycle Corpn. of India Ltd. | 676 | Final decision by BIFR for winding up. Under stay by Court. |
| 5. | Cycle Corporation of India Ltd. (CCIL) | 1718 | Prima-facie conclusion by BIFR for winding up. |
| 6. | Mining & Allied Machinery Corpn. | 4217 | Prima-facie conclusion for winding up. Under stay by Court. |
| 7. | Tannery & Footwear Corpn. Ltd. (TAFCO) | 1400 | Final decision by BIFR for winding up. |
| 8. | Rehabilitation Ind. Corpn. Ltd. (RIC) | 1272 | Discontinuance of operations recommended by Disinvestment Commission. |

Besides, Govt. have also decided to extend the period of VRS for another 3 months to the remaining employees of Bharat Process & Mechanical Engineers Ltd. (BPMEL) for which a decision to VRS was taken by the Government eptember, 1997. BIFR has given its final recommendation for winding up this Company.

(c) The Finance Minister had announced in the Budget Speech that in generality of cases and in enterprises not involving strategic consideration, the Government share-holding in public sector enterprises would be brought down to 26%. The Government has so far decided to go below 50% holding in 4 cases after considering the recommendations of Disinvestment Commission. Government have also given 'in principle' approval to convert 23 PSUs of the Ministry of Industry into Joint Venture companies.

(d) As on 30.9.1998, sixty four Central PSUs stand referred to BIFR.

(e) and (f) Sixty Central PSUs were referred to Disinvestment Commission. However, seven PSUs were subsequently withdrawn. Disinvestment Commission have recommended for classification of some of the industries as strategic. No final decision has been taken by the Govt. on these recommendations.

BIFR — Board for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction.

**Supreme Court's Directive in regard to Recommendations of NCBC**

*310. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI S.M. KRISHNA:

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court had directed that the advice of National Commission for Backward Classes should be ordinarily binding on Government;

(b) whether the said direction of the Supreme Court is not reflected in the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the reasons for taking more than one month to arrive at a decision on each advice of the Commission;

(e) whether a large number of young people are becoming overaged for recruitment/competitive exams due to such delay in implementing NCBCs advice; and

(f) whether Government would compensate the youth so suffered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir, the Supreme Court in its judgment of C.W.P. 930 of 1990 of Indira Sawhney & Others